with territorial unit, is not organised round a symbolic office such as the Shilluk *reth*ship, the Anuak nobility or the Acholi chiefship. The intersection of the segmentary system is the basis of organisation and co-operation. The Lango organisation closely approaches that of the Luo but, until further information is forthcoming as to the exact position of the Lango *rwot* and the political importance of the lineage system, the degree of similarity is difficult to determine. On the basis of present knowledge it would seem that the Lango, with their hierarchy of village headmen, *jago* and *rwoth* are more highly organised than the acephalous Luo, with their ritual experts, elders and lineage heads.

619
171

THE LUO HOMESTEAD

The homestead, the residence of an elementary, or sometimes a joint, family, is generally called a *dala* (Bantu) or *pachu* (Nilotic). It is surrounded with a thick hedge of euphorbia, in which is a narrow gap forming the entrance to the kraal round which are grouped the huts and granaries.

592

According to Evans-Pritchard, there is no real village group. The head of the homestead is the head of the family occupying it. Each married man has his own hut, with huts for his wives on either side. Unmarried women live in a hut looked after by an old woman, and single men occupy a *bachelors'* hut near the gate in order to guard against cattle thieves. Sons often go and found their own homesteads if they wish to be independent. The eldest son eventually builds his wife a hut of her own outside his father's homestead and the younger brothers will later do the same. The large polygynous family thus splits up gradually as the sons extend their own family units and form separate homesteads. This process is completed with the death of the original man *dala* and the inheritance of the widows. The first wife is the chief wife of the homestead, but a husband sets aside so many cattle for each of his wives for use by their families and these are inherited by the sons on the father's death.

591
592

INHERITANCE

Property is inherited by a man's sons or, failing sons, by his brother. A widow, on the death of her husband is inherited by one of his brothers, by a distant kinsman, or, if she is still young, by a son born of a different wife. The widow is *ci lieul*, 'the wife of the grave',(1) and children born to her are called after the dead husband who is regarded as their *pater*.

428
587
851

MARRIAGE

Bridewealth

The number of bridewealth animals varies according to circumstances. Before the cattle plagues at the end of the 19th century 20 to 40 cattle were given, in 1932 the usual number was 15 to 20, and since that time the number has been further reduced. According to Evans-Pritchard the bridewealth cattle fall into two parts:(2)

583

1. The *dho kony*: the animals first handed over by the husband and due to

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa* IX, 1936, p.161. (2) *Ibid.*, p.139.

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1936) 1949
FL11 Luo FL11

many cattle, sheep, and goats and most of their country is suitable for a pastoral life. Fishing plays a big part in the economy of the lakeside tribes. Hunting is little practised to-day, but in the old days organized battues were a regular feature.

The homestead, the residence of an elementary family or joint family, is generally called *dala*, a Bantu word, but in the more purely Luo parts of the country the Nilotic word *pacho* (pl. *mier*) is used, especially by the older men. It is usually surrounded by a thick hedge of euphorbia, a narrow gap in which is the entrance to the kraal, round which are the huts and granaries. Nothing is said about the domestic life of such homesteads nor of kinship life in this article, for its purpose is to outline the nature of the larger structural groups.

2

At the present time Luoland is divided into a number of administrative locations. These locations, shown on the map, vary considerably in size of area and population. According to official returns most have populations of under 20,000 and the only two with populations of over 30,000 are Alego (53,604 with density of 244 to the square mile) and Samia (41,011 with density of 193). Density of population is greatest in some of the fertile northerly locations: North Ugenya (29,363 with density of 515), South Ugenya (7,497 with density of 341), and North Gem (29,014 with density of 387). It is lowest in some of the lakeside locations in South Kavirondo: Kasingiri (1,904 with density of 12), Kasigunga (2,041 with density of 21), and Gwasi (4,934 with density of 42).

These locations correspond approximately with the old tribal areas of the Luo. The main differences are that in South Kavirondo Karacuonyo location (28,207 with density of 167), Mumbo location (26,465 with density of 174), and Kabondo location (7,926 with density of 126) comprised a single tribe, as did North Gem and South Gem (19,442 with density of 237), North Ugenya and South Ugenya, and West Kano (28,617 with density of 265) and East Kano (25,730 with density of 158).

It is beyond question that the whole of Luoland was once occupied by Bantu and Nilo-Hamitic tribes and that the pressure which has continued, particularly against the Bantu, on the confines of Luoland to the north, east, and south, almost up to the present day is the end of a gradual process of expansion and assimilation. The Luo have been greatly influenced by Bantu culture during its development.

The expansion of the Luo towards the south has resulted in their division into two parts between which Kisumu location forms a narrow bridge, the Luo of Central Kavirondo, the *Joiye*, the 'Inside People', and the Luo of South Kavirondo, the *Jooko*, the 'Outside People'. The southwards migration seems to have been across the gulf from Uyoma and Asembo to Karacuonyo, and not round it and to have taken place over several generations, commencing, if the genealogies are to be trusted about seven generations ago. Across the gulf the Luo came up against Bantu (*Maka*) and Nilo-Hamitic (*Lango*) tribes. The conquest and cultural

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

allow a man's head and shoulders to enter; the roof is of grass. Outside these again is the circle of huts, strongly built of sticks and grass and with the sides plastered with a mixture of dung and mud. Each married male in the village has his own hut, and besides this a hut for each wife and two smaller huts, one for his sons and another for his daughters, which latter live with an old woman, often their grandmother. The two sexes are kept rigidly apart, and though, as will be seen, the Jaluo notion of morality is scarcely the same as the European, there is little of the promiscuity of intercourse among the Kavirondo which is so noticeable a feature among the other Nilotic tribes of British East Africa.

As the sons grow up they marry and build houses in the father's village for themselves and their wives. The eldest son usually remains with his father for good and all, but as the other sons in turn become fathers of families, they often build villages for themselves near the paternal village; as often as not, however, the sons keep together after the father's death, the eldest becoming the head of the family.

There is a strict law of exogamy among the Jaluo, though a son may marry [illegible] no blood relation of his; similarly two sisters are often simultaneously the wives of one man.

Their rule of inheritance, though apparently complicated, is really simple. The husband sets aside so many of his cattle to provide food for each wife, the chief or first wife naturally having a larger share than the rest. On his death the wife and the cattle set aside for her pass to her sons, her eldest son as the new *pater familias* again getting the larger share. If a man has no sons by the first wife but sons by another, all the property, including the first wife and her daughters, pass to these sons; if a man has no sons, all his property passes to his brother or nearest male blood relation; females can own no property, being themselves but chattels. On the death of a chief his power descends upon the eldest son of his first wife, even though his second or third wife may have borne him a son before the son by the first wife was born; *i.e.*, A is his first and chief wife and E his second. A may bear him two daughters, B and C, and then a son D. Though in the meanwhile E has borne him a son F, D will become chief in virtue of his mother's priority, even though he has an elder brother (F). But if D is not of fit age to govern, F may become chief, as a regency is too advanced an institution; and similarly if both D and F are infants, some elder blood relation, such as their eldest uncle, will succeed their father. This rule not unnaturally leads to much quarrelling, as, when the dispossessed heir grows up he often lays claim to rule, with disastrous results.

A great many formalities attend a Kavirondo marriage. As has been remarked above, exogamy is the strict rule. The young man having declared his choice to his father, the latter goes off to the girl's father and arranges the dowry. He then returns, and the intending bridegroom goes over with a bull or some goats as earnest money and partakes of the preliminary feast, an essential feature of this being an offering set aside for the sun-god, consisting of a little meat, part of a

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

originate all the larger lineages which provide the political framework of Luo society.

My illustrations of Luo lineage structure are taken from material on one large lineage group, that of Karachuonyo. This group inhabits the present locations of Karachuonyo and Kasipul, and in 1947 had a population of 90,000. I lived here from December 1946 till March 1947 and again for the month of September 1947. On each occasion I took with me a Luo student from Makerere College as interpreter and research assistant. I went through my material with a dozen or more of the Luo students at Makerere who themselves came from a number of different locations. Clearly, from such a short period in the field, my results are not complete, but in so far as they add to the information at present available, I present them for what they are worth. The map (Fig. 3) shows all the Luo locations of South Kavirondo, those of the Karachuonyo group and of the other lineages which claim descent from the common ancestors, Jook and his wife Awandu, being shown in heavy type.

III. THE FAMILY

The most prominent cultural features of the Luo landscape are the euphorbia hedges, at stages of growth varying from that of 3-foot saplings to that of 30-foot trees, dating each site by their planting at the time of first occupation, and throwing a thick green wall round the cluster of huts within. This residential unit is the *dala* or *pacho*, and will be referred to as the homestead. The dwelling-huts ranged in a circle round the inside of the hedge are those of married women, the chief wife's hut being at the side opposite to the entrance through the hedge, and the huts of subsequent wives arranged in alternate succession on either side of that of the chief wife.[1] The husband and head of the homestead divides his time between the huts of his wives, the chief wife's hut taking precedence,[2] having no other quarters of his own except an *abila*, a smaller hut usually in the centre of the circle, which was his only place of privacy. There is a belief that if the husband leaves the homestead to escape from the bickering of his wives he will die on re-entering it, and the *abila* provides him with a safer sanctuary. It was also a vantage point from which he could keep a watchful eye on his cattle in the nearby kraal. The homestead is the spatial correlate of the compound polygynous family and is subdivided into the households of its component elementary families. Just as *dala* or *pacho* applies both figuratively to the social group and concretely to the homestead occupied by it, so *ot* applies both to house and to the household of wife and children occupying it. The title of the head of the homestead and its family group is *wuon dala* or *wuon pacho*; *jadwong* (elder) may be substituted for *wuon*. Correspondingly, each wife is *wuon ot*, signifying that she is head of the household, proprietress of its hut and all other effects, and leader of its domestic and economic activities. The word *wuon* is usually translated as 'father', and is in fact the classificatory term for all agnates of the generation senior to the speaker, including the 'genitor'. But its use with reference to all married women,

[1] See Gluckman in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. Radcliffe-Brown and Forde. The Luo family has a 'house-property complex' of the Zulu type but in a less extreme form.

[2] This is often striking in ritual. The husband's most valuable possessions are also kept there. With the present changes in hut design the chief wife's hut is often of the new and more pretentious rectangular pattern, while a second wife's may also be rectangular but smaller, and the third wife's still of the traditional circular type.

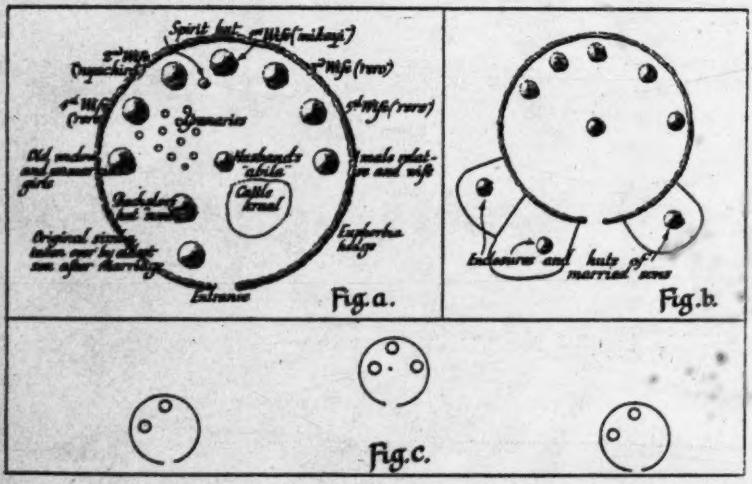
17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

and in a number of other sociological contexts, suggests that its primary meaning is that of owner.[1] The title of the first wife is *mikayi*, that of the second *nyachira*, and of all subsequent wives *rero*.

The diagrams below show the plan of the homestead at typical phases of the family cycle. The fuller details of Fig. *a* are omitted from the other figures. Taking the compound polygynous family as described above as an arbitrary point of departure, the cycle might be charted thus:

PHASE 1. The compound polygynous family of husband, wives, and immature offspring.

2. The eldest son matures, marries, and at first lives with his wife in the original bachelors' hut (*simba*) while his younger brothers build a new one next to it. (Fig. *a*).



3. The eldest son eventually builds his wife a hut of her own outside his father's homestead hedge. His younger brothers marry and follow suit. Offspring are born to them, bringing into existence the compound polygynous grand family. (Fig. *b*.)

4. The sons marry subsidiary wives, gradually splitting off from the original homestead to form separate ones of their own. The head of the original homestead eventually dies, his widows are taken over by their stepsons or brothers-in-law, and the old homestead is in course of time deserted. There is now an extended family, with the eldest or ablest of the dead man's sons as head, the sons' homesteads now each having reached phase 1 of the cycle. (Fig. *c*.)

The head of the compound family is, of course, a member of each of its component elementary families, but the fact that he is common to them all gives each a certain independence in relation to him as well as to one another. The elementary family

[1] It is the possessive form of *nwon* which has the meanings 'owner', 'father', 'grandiness'.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

is a most important grouping intermediate between the compound family and its individual members. It is a semi-autonomous domestic unit with its own kitchen economy, its own property rights in cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, land, tools, granaries, and food stocks. Correspondingly it is responsible for its own building and repairs, fuel and water collecting, food provision and allocation from harvest to harvest, and has its own ritual rights and obligations. But the husband is an element common to them all and, having his own rights and duties in respect of these matters, binds them closely together. Livestock are herded co-operatively, not only for all the elementary families of a homestead, but for several homesteads together. The husband is the titular head of a corporate group, not an absolute rightholder.[1] He allocates land, cattle, and other property accruing to the compound family group among its elementary families, and this allocation limits the proportion in which it will eventually be inherited by the sons in each elementary family. He is also able to make levies of property for special purposes from all his elementary families. But in all situations involving social groups wider than the homestead, its head is subject to the decisions of the leader-in-council of the lineage segment to which he belongs. The exclusiveness of elementary families is potentially high, but in practice depends on the skill of the homestead head in securing and maintaining harmony, and on the natural compatibility or otherwise of co-wives. When these factors favour, co-wives may be seen co-operating in many tasks, taking it in turns to supply the husband—or one another's children—with food, combining as a team for garden work, or sharing one another's water-supply. But it cannot be denied that the Luo regard friction between co-wives as being a more normal state of affairs. Behind these situational variations lies the invariable right of the husband to regular cooked food from each wife, of each wife to regular sexual attention from the husband, and the general responsibility of each elementary family for its own self-maintenance granted its rightful assistance from the husband in his proper part of each task.

The rearing of children is woven into this framework. The baby's first contacts are naturally with its mother, who may not finally wean it till it is about two years old, unless as a result of a subsequent pregnancy she has to do so sooner; for suckling a child with a younger sibling in the womb is regarded as robbing and endangering the latter. The baby sleeps in its mother's hut at night and sleeps and later plays near it during the day. It is most closely associated with the other members of its own elementary family, especially the female ones circling round the hearth for the preparation and cooking of food. Other members of the compound family will be hardly less well known from their presence together inside the homestead hedge, but all non-members of the homestead will be comparative strangers except very close relatives or near neighbours who are constant visitors within it.

Babies of either sex are soon each put in the charge of one of the older unmarried girls, probably a real or classificatory sister. This brings them in contact with the world outside the homestead, where a number of these nurse-girls (Dholuo *jopidi*) meet regularly in informal play groups. By the time children can run about on their own they too form play groups, including both girls and boys from several homesteads. Gradually the interests of the two sexes diverge, the boys going off with

[1] The Luo homestead in all phases of its life-cycle would sustain the definition of a corporate group in Weber's sense. See *Theory of Political and Economic Organization*, p. 133.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11

less as titular owner of the whole herd. The scheme of division may be represented as in the diagram below. All other livestock is divided in the same way. The eldest son of the first wife must marry before any other sons can do so, and if the first wife has no sons the rest must wait till there is no further chance of her bearing any. When the first wife dies, the second wife becomes chief wife of the homestead, but a first wife's full status can only be succeeded to when she is replaced by a sister and a new homestead is built. The property of a barren wife is inherited by a stepson who is adopted into her household to do the man's work in it.

CATTLE HERD

All herded together

Head of homestead titular owner of all

1. *Cattle of the* abila		*Cattle of the wives' houses*
Strict property of homestead head.		Most to *mikayi*, next to *nyachira*, rest among *rero* wives.
Used to help sons or brothers' sons to marry, or to marry new wives for homestead head. Residue ultimately inherited by the youngest son of the homestead, who also takes the father's share of cattle from any subsequent marriages of sisters. All derived from the heifer and bull taken by the father at every daughter's marriage, and from their increase.	2. Cattle strictly property of the wives. Ultimately inherited by youngest son of each house. All derived from the heifer called *rueh kode* received by the mother at each daughter's marriage, and from the heifer of *atake* and bull settled upon a wife by her father at the end of her marriage ceremonies.	3. Cattle held for sons' marriages. Any residue inherited by youngest son of each house. All derived from the cattle received at daughters' marriages other than those specified under 1 and 2.
Milk from these used by the homestead head.	Milk from these used by the wives.	

Homestead head has over all discretion in the original division of accruing cattle, and can persuade wives to give up cattle from category 3 to help stepsons to marry, and may by agreement take an extra heifer from those received at a daughter's marriage, to complete the bridewealth of one of his other wives.

Succession to authority in the family, and also in the lineage, depends on a combination of three qualifications: primogeniture, personal suitability in character and wealth, and appointment by one's predecessor. Primogeniture is highly regarded and preferred, but is never an absolute rule. Whenever an eldest son is unsuitable, or another agnatic relative is clearly more suitable, the latter is chosen to succeed. But a successor must be named by his predecessor, and as a result of the strong common sentiments in family and lineage segment, the predecessor's appointee seems usually to have been the one whom the elders of the group wish to elect when they meet at the funeral of the predecessor to confirm his choice.

Ancestor worship is falling into abeyance among the Luo of today. All those who go to school become at least nominal Christians, and this affects most of the young, while the old are becoming diffident in the performance of rites which no longer command universal respect. The spirit shrines which used to be placed between the first and second wives' huts are hardly seen today, nor the three stones which used to stand before the spirit shrine, with the stone of sacrifice buried beneath (see